

Britain Palestine Friendship and Twinning Network

Draft Minutes of AGM 2021 (to be approved at 2022 AGM)

25th March 7.00pm

Via Zoom

Item	Subject		
<p>The chair welcomed all arrivals, groups represented and particularly Palestinian friends attending. It was explained that voting was one member per group and would be by a simple show of hands, there being two tellers.</p>			
1	Attendance	<p>Groups represented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Antonine Friendship Link with Jayyous- Bedford-Al Walaja- Bradford-on-Avon Friends of Palestine- Brent Friends of Palestine- Derby and Derbyshire Friends of Hebron- Dundee Nablus Twinning Association- Friends of Nablus and Surrounding Areas- Hanwell Friends of Sabastiya HAFSA- Haringey Justice for Palestinians- Kennington-Bethlehem Link- Lichfield Concern For Palestine Group- Liverpool Friends of Palestine Bil'in Link- Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust- Northampton Al Bireh Palestine Friendship Association- Olive Harvest Trust- Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association- Pendle-Beit Leid- Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine- St Albans Friends of Palestine- St Philips and St James – St Andrews Ramallah- Stafford – Beit Liqya Friendship Group	-

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Totnes and Salfit Twinning and Friendship Group - Unite – West London Community Branch – Shu’fat Refugee Camp East Jerusalem - Walsall-Kobar Friendship Association – - West Wales Friends of Palestine <p>Apologies: Stourbridge – Seir</p> <p>Non voting attendees</p> <p>Members attending: Tony Pearce, Anthony Richardson, Paula Knight, Lesley Dawson, Helena France, Miranda Townsend, Annie Delahunty, Geoffrey Marshall, Jeremy Holloway, Kate Scott, Kate Arnot, Colin Lomas, Andrew Ashdown, Pat Gaffney, Andree Ryan, Judy Adams, Hilary Tyrrel, Philip Nixon, Mel Errington, Mary Short, Mike Scott-Baumann, Avril Alexander, Mike Reed, Anna Sethi, Rob Wall, Ahmed Sayed, Penny Welch, Andrew Macdonald, Mohammad Issa, Mike Whitehead, Julie Pearn, Jane Marshall, Maggie Foyer, Andrew Eastough, Fiona Dunlop, Melanie Coyne, Mary Saunders, Jenny Kelly, Stuart Sweeney, Ursula Walker, Martyn Lynch, Judith Hammond, Majd Snono, Linda Daragmeh</p> <p>Pending member: Jane Marshall Chester/House of Bread</p> <p>Patron – Sir Vincent Fean</p> <p>Network Development Madeleine McGivern</p>	
2	Apologies	Yazan Khader Committee and Sheffield, Jayne Wright NABFA	
3	Minutes of 2020 AGM for accuracy	Accepted as an accurate record Proposed Geoff Marshall, Seconded Helena France	
4	Matters arising not on agenda	The invitation to hold our annual conference in Dundee and celebrate their forty years of twinning with Nablus was disturbed by the pandemic. We congratulate them on almost 42 years now. The annual conference had been successfully held on line and the Zoom model enabled a third of those attending to be Palestinian. Many had asked to for their contact details to be shared for them to stay in touch and this has been done. The conference report will be completed and shared soon.	
5	Chairman’s report	The chair spoke to his report – attachment 1	
6	Treasurer’s report	The treasurer spoke to her report – attachment 2, with notes	

A MINUTE OF SILENCE TO RECALL ALL THOSE WHO DIED IN THE PANDEMIC, PARTICULARLY IN PALESTINE UNDER OCCUPATION

	Election of committee	<p>The chair explained that there was still an opportunity to join the committee, or even take a part in its work without becoming a member. There were no volunteers or nominations. The committee had all agreed to stand again and introduced themselves to the attendees. Re-election of the committee was proposed by Ursula Walker and seconded by Julie Peart. Agreed nem con by show of hands. The committee were thanks for their service by members.</p>
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Some members arrived at 7.30 due to an accidental confusion about the meeting start time, for which the Chair apologised from the committee

7	Network development – Madeleine McGivern	<p>Madeleine welcomed all to the meeting, especially Palestinian friends, and thanked group members for their willingness to engage with her in many conversations as she started he work in May and sought their views. She pointed out that this difficult year had been even harder in Palestine. People often feel that they wish that they could do more to help, but she recognised how hard groups were working to continue to support and engage with the Palestinian people throughout the year. She reminded us of the old adage that 'If you think you're too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a tent with a mosquito'. She is still trying to contact all groups so as to build and strengthen Friendship and Twinning. The website has been completely remodelled and contains many resources. A new on regarding support during the COVID19 pandemic is about to go live. We now have a private Facebook Group https://www.facebook.com/groups/655230248475223 for members to share ideas, support each other, publicise events etc as well as a Facebook page which is public and acts as our 'shop window'. We have had 5 new member groups join in the last year! Madeleine said that she is willing to be contacted by members to discuss F&T issues at any time. Majd raised the issue of what kind of support might be useful from a volunteer – examples included largely technical, IT issues – which volunteers had helped with in year. Mike Scott-Bauman said that he was very impressed with the quality of the website.</p>
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		<p>Mary from HAFSA sought explanation of the different roles of the FB group and page, which was given. The group had been set up in response to requests from members about developing a way to keep in touch with each other between conferences. Tony Richardson (ORFA) encouraged groups to join the group. Jane Marchall, newly a member and linked with House of Bread in Bethlehem introduced herself and Pat Gaffney from Bethlehem-Kennington Link made a contact to follow up with her as they are also supporting House of Bread.</p>	
8	<p>Address by Sir Vincent Fean, Patron</p>	<p>Sir Vincent thanked everyone for coming, especially Palestinian friends. He pointed out the election currently under way in Israel, where the Likud party has not won a majority and the president is seeking a coalition which is likely to be with a very right wing group w, which will not be good for Palestine. He also hoped that the Palestinian elections due to take place on 22nd May will go ahead (haven't happened since 2006) and stressed that unlike on the last occasion, thw West should respect the democratic process and outcome of that election.</p> <p>He told us that on 26th April the UN Human Right Council had adopted four motions relating to self-determination for Palestine, but that Britain had voted against this along with the Czech Republic and the Marshall Islands.</p> <p>He is very eager for schools to build connections between Britain and Palestine, via the British Council Connecting Classrooms project and otherwise. This build many opportunities for students in both places, though he understands the challenges to schools in the time of COVID and false perceptions of Palestine.</p> <p>Finally, he thanked the committee and Madeleine for their hard work in the previous year.</p> <p>In response to questions, Sir Vincent spoke of the Balfour Project's attempts to influence regarding the situation in Palestine for which Britain bears a historic responsibility. An attempt to try to find and prick the conscience of government re the rule of international law. On 25/26 May the Balfour Project will host a conference on the Rule of Law with British and Palestinian lawyers and politicians Balfour Project Contributing to justice, peace and reconciliation in the</p>	

		<p>Middle East. He supported people writing to their MPs re recognition of the state of Palestine. Majd (Salfit Tubas) welcomed schools links which have many advantages including exploring skills and cultures. Anna Sethi (BFoP) asked for clarification on the annual gathering of the UN Human Rights Council, which VF gave and offered to circulate. Examples of existing schools links were requested.</p>	
9	<p>Motions to AGM:</p> <p>Human rights proposal from 2020 AGM</p> <p>Constitutional amendments (attached)</p>	<p>Following late receipt of a proposal from CADFA at the 2020 AGM, it had been agreed that the committee would consult the membership re the inclusion of an article re human rights in our constitution and this was done. Later a statement was placed on our website:</p> <p>BPFTN operates in accordance with the laws of the United Kingdom, and respects the UK's international commitments, among them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Universal Declaration of Human Rights • the Charter of the United Nations • International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law (including the Geneva Conventions) • the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. <p>We believe these universal rights should be enjoyed equally by our Palestinian partners. Individual member groups determine how best to integrate these principles into their activities, with the network's support. This was agreed nem con.</p> <p>Kate Scott (NABPFA) had proposed that the Rome Statute be added. This was passed by a majority.</p> <p>Kate Scott had submitted potential amendments in advance of the meeting. These were discussed and she suggested to delete her second one re patrons. accept her first clarification re Ireland.</p> <p>Jean Fitzpatrick proposed the first proposed constitutional amendment from the Committee re introducing an associate membership option</p>	

	Motions submitted by groups	for residents of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This was agreed nem con. Tony Pearce introduced the second proposed constitutional amendment re increasing the notice period and process of timings for the AGM, allowing local groups longer to consult and propose motions for the AGM, building network engagement. Passed nem con. Tony Pearce proposed the third constitutional amendment from the committee re changing our financial and membership year to match when we now hold our conference. Passed nem con. None were submitted	
10	Network priorities	It was agreed that ideas from members and conference be sent to the committee proposing priorities for the year ahead within a couple of weeks (latest 22nd April). An email will go to member groups week commencing 5th April including: - AGM minutes - Conference report (final version proofread and designed)	
11	AOB	None	
12	Next meeting	TBA	

Attachment1.

Britain Palestine Friendship and Twinning Network

Chair's report 2020 – 2021

It has been my honour to Chair the Network for another year. For friends in Palestine it has been even more challenging and stressful than normal. For some it has been a traumatic and tragic year. For everyone it has been a difficult year.

Twinning and Friendship groups have heard first-hand how Covid has affected their friends in Palestine. On top of the 'lock down' restrictions faced here has been the lack of financial support to protect families financially. A number of groups have focussed their efforts on helping to alleviate hardship.

There has, however, been an interesting and positive development. With groups here meeting online, more have included friends in Palestine in their meetings, leading to closer links and

better understanding of the situation there. As a Network, we also benefitted from this approach at our recent Conference with many friends from Palestine joining our discussions.

The Network has made a step change this year with the excellent work done by Madeleine McGivern. A generous donation from the Mosawi Foundation enabled us to engage Madeleine to undertake work in improving communications, building better links with other Palestine support groups and nurturing and supporting new twinning and friendship groups. She has produced some really good materials for new and existing groups and has completely revamped the website. We are delighted that the Mosawi Foundation have agreed to give another year's funding.

We have continued to benefit from having Sir Vincent Fean and Hanan Al H'roub as our patrons. Vincent has also attended many of our committee meetings and is always willing to help in practical ways. We recently decided to ask Ahmed Masoud to become a patron. Ahmed is a Palestinian from Gaza and we are hoping he might be able to help us to develop more links there. Ahmed is also a playwright and producer and we are hoping that he will be able to help develop and foster creative activities as part of group activities

I want to conclude by thanking all Committee members for the work they have put in over the year. Most of us have our own twinning or friendship group and are involved in other activities but attendance at meetings has been really good and we have had far more meetings than normal. The success of our Conference reflected the many hours of planning which committee members put in.

Tony Pearce

Attachment 2. Treasurer's report with notes

Treasurer report for AGM 25 March 2021

Notes:

- 1) Money paid in: via cash, cheque, bank transfer
- 2) Money paid out: only by cheque (2 signatures required)
- 3) MM: Madeleine McGivern – undertaking the development contract role
- 4) Gifts: the committee decided to give gifts of Zaytoun products to a number of people in recognition to the invaluable help they had given to the Network
- 5) Zoom hosting: no charges to the Network: time and hosting set-up donated by a number of people

From BANK STATEMENTS				
BALANCE	31/01/2020		16578.02	
GENERAL FUND			1578.02	
RESTRICTED FUND (DEV CONTRACT)			15000.00	
BALANCE	28/02/2021		6657.62	
GENERAL FUND			2907.62	
RESTRICTED FUND (DEV CONTRACT)			3750.00	

DETAILS

		OUT	IN
SUBS			385.00
SUBS			510.00
MM		11250.00	
MM		250.00	
CONF 2020 LUNCH TEAS		492.00	
CONF 2020 LUNCH			650.00
WEB SITE HOSTING		194.40	
ZAYTOUN GIFTS		69.50	
FLOWERS		20.00	
CONF CHURCH		50.00	
DONATION			100.00
DONATION -SAMIHA			762.50
		12325.90	2407.50
			6659.62

NOT SHOWN: (TO APPEAR IN THE TREASURER'S REPORT 2022)

GENERAL FUNDS INCOME: MORE ANNUAL SUBS PAYMENTS ANTICIPATED TO APPEAR IN MARCH 2021
STATEMENT

GENERAL FUNDS PAYMENT OUT: £34.75 ZAYTOUN GIFT HAMPER – RETIRING GROUP CO-ORDINATOR
£50 (APPROX) : ZAYTOUN GIFTS – ANNUAL CONFERENCE PRODUCER.

Miscellaneous comments:

Not incurred this reporting year: Committee member travel (2019-20: £1087), any conference venue charges.
Not collected: any surplus monies from conference attendance.

Jean Fitzpatrick
18 March 2021